

My name is Laura Heneghan, I live in New Fairfield, CT and I support HB 6517.

As both a parent of a child with dyslexia and a special education attorney representing many children with dyslexia, I have significant experience with the lack of implementation of scientifically PROVEN structured literacy programs in CT school districts.

Teachers work very hard but are unable to teach reading to a vast number of students because the students learn differently and the teachers do not have the skills. Many of the districts I work in depend on a whole language approach to reading which has been dispelled over and over as unhelpful to a student with dyslexia. With some training teachers could have an immediate impact on ALL learners as all learners can benefit from phonological and phonemic awareness.

As an attorney, I have taken a 60 hour Orton Gillingham course which is a proven scientific method to teach reading. It is not onerous, or difficult and in fact, it makes teaching and learning reading fun as you use all of your senses.

Many districts I go into say they teach a multitude of methodologies and again, science doesn't back this up.

My son was going into 5th grade in the public school and still struggled to read. He was unable to rhyme which is a blazing sign of dyslexia but I was told he was simply developing slowly. We removed him from public school, took on the expense of private school and after INTENSE intervention including having 7th grade english taught 1:1, he is and will always be a struggling reader but got the skills to be successful. He is in his final semester of college and I have no doubt that he would not be in college if he had remained in the public school.

We need training of teachers, investment in scientifically proven programs, compliance and accountability. Even where some of the teachers are trained, programs are not being implemented with fidelity and there is no oversight.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Laura A. Heneghan